

Intelligence)
^ Memos etc. prior to discovery of
missiles

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5 May 1972

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5 October 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Implications of an Announcement by the President that the US would Conduct Overhead Reconnaissance of Cuba, and of the Actual Reconnaissance Thereafter

NOTE: The following are the conclusions reached by a panel of members of the Board of National Estimates and of the ONE Staff.

1. The President's announcement would be vigorously condemned by the Soviets and the Cubans as evincing an intention to commit acts of international aggression, in violation of international law.
2. Those elements of free world opinion which desire the US to take decisive action against Cuba would probably consider the announcement as a disappointingly weak manifestation. The greater weight of publically expressed opinion, in Latin America and elsewhere, would almost certainly condemn the announcement as threatening a marked increase in tensions and in the danger of war.
3. The Cubans, or some other country, would probably bring the matter before the UN shortly after the announcement.

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(they would be virtually certain to do so if a reconnaissance vehicle were shot down). Having international law on their side, they would hope to achieve a UN condemnation of the US for acts threatening peace. The UN situation would be complicated, and it is possible that in one way or another the US could avert a formal resolution. Nevertheless, it is highly unlikely that the US would find much support among the assembled nations. It might find itself in virtual isolation for the first time. To the extent that this occurred it would be considered by the Soviets as a notable achievement.

4. The Soviets and the Cubans would probably be impressed by the evident willingness of the US government to raise still further the level of tension over Cuba, and to commit itself to further risks. This would almost certainly not lead to any change in Soviet policy toward Cuba. Neither would the Soviets be likely to retaliate by any particular act in the Berlin situation. Relations between the US and the USSR would be further strained, however, and what little chance there may be of a negotiated solution of the Berlin question would probably be diminished.

5. The Soviets and Cubans would make every effort to shoot down any reconnaissance vehicle that came over Cuba. If

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they succeeded in doing so, the tensions would be somewhat increased, though the international political effects of the shootdown would not in themselves be as great as if it had occurred without the prior Presidential announcement. The demonstration of military capability which such an incident would provide would almost certainly impress many Latin Americans.

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